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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2015

## The latest buzz

Port Colborne residents donned running shoes and shaved their heads to raise money for the Terry Fox Run.  
Page 10

## Stomping out poverty

In the annual mayor's grape stop in St. Catharines, the lakeside city's mayor came out on top for food raised.  
Page 17

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# INPORT NEWS



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## Therapy on four legs



FRANK RUZYCKI/  
POSTMEDIA  
NETWORK  
Jackson  
Wyatt, 14,  
weaves  
through  
cones with  
the guidance  
of instructor  
Angie  
Rutgrok  
during his  
lesson at  
EquineAbility  
Saturday  
in Port  
Colborne.  
See story  
and photos  
on page 2.

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# UPFRONT

■ **THERAPY:** EquineAbility Niagara teaching students with different abilities to ride

## Empowerment through horses

**FRANKI IKEMAN**  
Postmedia Network

For the Wyatt family Saturday mornings are spent waking up early and heading to the barn.

The family volunteers at EquineAbility's Port Colborne farm, where they mock stalls, help with chores and take care of the horses.

"Our family of six has been volunteering here for the better part of a year, and it's been the most amazing and transformative experience," Lianne Wyatt said. "Ours is a special-needs family. My husband, my two sons all have a diagnosis of autism and ADHD and my eldest daughter has a diagnosis of anxiety and OCD and we find when we come here, those symptoms that trouble them tend to dissipate."

The children are involved in the therapeutic riding program at EquineAbility in some way. Wyatt's two sons, Jackson and Matthew, take weekly lessons and her eldest daughter, Olivia, volunteers leading students in the program, and is hoping to get her Equine Therapy certification eventually. Her youngest daughter, Rachel, is not a part of the therapeutic riding but does take lessons and volunteers her time at the farm.

At first the family got involved simply to spend time with horses.

"The riding came as an afterthought, but the benefits have been unbelievable," she said. "We've watched core strength develop in Matthew, we've watched it build self-confidence and self-esteem."

"The kids come home feeling more capable. It's incredible, they've really grown to love it."

Wyatt said in terms of social development, her children are interacting with the horses in special way to allow them to communicate more effectively.

Something about horses really touches people on a soul-deep level, and we have yet to find anything like this so we're really excited to be here," she said. "To be able



PHOTOS BY FRANKI IKEMAN/  
POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Above: Jackson Wyatt, 14, trots with the guidance of instructor Angie Ruigrok during his lesson at EquineAbility Saturday in Port Colborne.

Right: Matthew Wyatt, 12, grooms Cowboy at EquineAbility Saturday in Port Colborne



to care for a horse, being the majestic beast that it is, I think it's really empowering." Angie Ruigrok founded EquineAbility in 2010, and

has been teaching therapeutic riding for about 10 years before that. She is a certified intermediate instructor with the Canadian Therapeutic

Riding Association, and her program follows the guidelines set out by the association for therapeutic riding.

"Therapeutic riding is rid-

ing for individuals with varying abilities," Ruigrok said, "But it's recreational riding, so we teach how to ride a horse to whatever ability they can

and that can vary."

Ruigrok said she has students in her program at all ends of the spectrum, from those who need to be led around entirely to those who are nearly show-ready.

"It really is all individual, it's based on the rider's abilities and their goals," she said.

The students spend 30 minutes in the ring on horseback working on a variety of exercises, followed by 15 minutes in the barn learning day-to-day horse care skills such as grooming, tacking and barn care.

The horses are not typical lesson horses either, Ruigrok said.

She said even the quietest and most experienced lesson horse or pony would take about six months to learn what is being asked of them as a therapeutic riding horse.

"The biggest thing is we ask them to not only listen to the rider's aids, but there's a lot they need to learn to ignore," Ruigrok said, "because a lot of our riders, they may have tone, they may be fidgety in the saddle, so they need to be able to tolerate all of those extra sensations and be able to kind of pick out which of those sensations are actually asking for something and which ones are just kind of that background noise of the rider."

"It does take a special kind of horse to be that tolerant."

EquineAbility recently held its annual horse show, an opportunity for riders in the program to show off their skills, get some feedback and a taste for competition in a low-pressure atmosphere.

"It's a ton of fun. The riders really enjoy it, they get to show off for their family, their friends, whoever they want to come and see them and at the same time get a little bit of feedback on how they're doing. It's very low-key," Ruigrok said.

For more information on EquineAbility visit [www.equineabilityniagara.com](http://www.equineabilityniagara.com).

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Twitter: @FrankiIkeman

## LOCAL NEWS

## ■ HEALTH CARE

# Business has say in NHS plan

ALLAN BENNER  
Postmedia Network

Access to local hospitals ought to be included in a vision of health care that will guide the growth of Niagara Health System for the next decade.

"That was the message from about a dozen Welland area business representatives who shared their thoughts about a vision statement proposed by the NHS, as part of the development of a new strategic plan.

"I would like to see something in there about close proximity or something saying that communities could have and be entitled to have a hospital," said Faye Tushnet, from Welland business Write for You.

She was one of several people at the meeting who shared similar thoughts during the meeting, organized in cooperation with Welland-Pelham Chamber of Commerce at Fuzzy Logic restaurant.

Consultant Richard Delaney from Delaney and Associates led the discussion about the strategic plan development and vision statement.

The proposed document speaks of providing the best care possible for patients, but Len Stolk from Stolk Construction said access could be a barrier to achieving that goal.

"It's hard to be the best when people feel that they can't access (services) easily," he said.

"You have a new hospital in St. Catharines, and it's fine for cancer treatment or something major ... but for minor ailments, a sick child with a fever or something like that, it's a big trip to go."

The last line of the proposed vision statement is: "Compassion is, and always will be, our core."

But Welland resident Maggie Murray

## NIAGARA HEALTH SYSTEM PROPOSED VISION STATEMENT

"Each day we dedicate ourselves to our patients and their families, as if we were family too.

Staff, physicians and volunteers are empowered to collaborate as trusted partners, together with patients, families and NHS health partners, to produce the best health outcomes possible. We continue to learn, improve and innovate to provide the best care possible for patients in their time of need.

"We meet challenges with excitement, passion, integrity and professionalism. "Compassion is, and always will be, our core."

pointed out: "If you don't have accessibility, where is the compassion?"

NHS board member Bunny Alexander said the strategic plan is part of a "huge renewal" for the health system.

"We're looking for your input into the development of our 10-year plan," Alexander said. "It sounds like a long way out but that's where we need to be looking."

"This is our first real strategic plan for the Niagara Health System," she added. Although the health system has developed plans in the past, there was "never anything as significant as what we're doing here."

Past plans, Alexander added, did not include input from the community.

"This is new and very important." She said the plan will serve as "a map for our future," describing it as "an expression of how we, as staff, volunteers, physicians and the board, will create the future that we want to see for health care



ALLAN BENNER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Kerry Gruarin from the YMCA shares ideas about the development of a new strategic plan for the Niagara Health System, during a stakeholder meeting organized by the Welland Pelham Chamber of Commerce, Monday. Pictured with Gruarin are, from left, Dan Lynch from BioLinc and NHS board member Bunny Alexander, on Monday.

in Niagara."

And developing a vision statement is the first step towards developing that strategic plan.

"Once we know where we're going then we'll look at how do we behave, what are the values that we'll use to operate the NHS,"

she said. "Then we'll decide what are the goals that we need to set and how are we going to measure it achieve the desired future."

In addition to community stakeholder meetings, NHS spokesman Brady Wood said, the health system is also planning a

series of 10 public meetings in the months to come to hear from the community as well.

Wood said the strategic plan would be complete in 2016.

allan.benner@postmedia.ca  
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## ■ I'VE BEEN THINKING

## Life is precious even in disability or distress

FATHER DAVID GRAHAM SCOTT  
St. Ignace of Antioch Orthodox Church

I never heard of the novelist Jojo Moyes until my sister loaned me the book *Me Before You*.

This is a novel that is inspiring, funny and heart-breaking. It's about Louisa, a laid-back, charity ex-waitress, and Will, an intense ex-tycoon, and their families.

The two young adults are brought together by Louisa's employment as a paid companion to Will, whose days as a high-powered executive, world traveller and athlete were abruptly ended by a traffic accident that left him a quadriplegic.

Louisa's contract is for six months and pays very well. But she begins to feel that six months is far too long a time to relate to the

bitter and uncommunicative Will. For his part Will finds his confinement to a wheelchair intolerable after his zestful years of big-time deal-making.

Louisa finds out that Will had recently tried to commit suicide. Her six-month contract is a compromise between Will and his family. He would wait that long if they would help him travel to Switzerland for assisted suicide.

Louisa decides she will do her best to convince Will that he can still find a new life even with his disability. Despite fumbling plans to give him good times, Louisa eventually manages to thaw some of Will's icy rejection of life, and Will encourages Louisa to start putting herself first and to make something of herself.

I leave the plot there. The novel is a page-turner. And it made me think about modern

people who seem invincibly unaware of Christian faith. The families in *Me Before You* show no connection with church or even with any philosophy such as once guided politicians like Cicero and Marcus Aurelius.

Even so, Louisa's mother is shocked that Will's family would agree to enable his suicide after six months, but Jojo Moyes gives no indication why she felt so strongly against euthanasia. Will's parents live increasingly separate lives, his mother a brittle justice of the peace and his father a well-to-do manager involved in an affair.

The characters in the novel seem either motivated by no more than career success or are concerned only to get by as they drift through life. Without faith in the God who created human beings in his own image, they show no awareness of innate human

dignity and worth.

For Will, confinement to a wheelchair means the end of any meaningful life. And yet even Stephen Hawking continues to research and write, even to travel, and Hawking is more confined than Will, who speaks without effort.

In early childhood Helen Keller was blinded and made deaf by a disease. Yet with Annie Sullivan's fingers to help, Helen learned Braille, which became her eyes and her ears and she graduated from Radcliffe College and campaigned worldwide for the disabled.

Life is precious and meaningful even in disability or distress.

Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly."

Shipwrecks  
— PengallSKIP GILLHAM  
For Postmedia Network

*Pengall* was a French flag bulk carrier that had been built at La Seyne in 1959.

The 172.5-metre-long vessel was diesel powered and able to carry in the range of 19,500 tonnes of cargo.

The ship did not come through the St. Lawrence Seaway until 1970 and was sold for Greek flag service in 1974. Renamed *Queen of Cephalonia*, the ship sustained heavy bottom damage from a grounding at Ronne Bank, in the Baltic Sea off the coast of East Germany on Sept. 15, 1975.

The vessel was refloated on Sept. 24 and laid up at Dunkirk, France. It was not economically feasible to repair the ship so, after being idle, it was sold to shipbreakers in Spain.

*Queen of Cephalonia* departed under tow on April 28, 1977. It arrived at Bilbao, Spain, on May 3 where, beginning in June, the hull was dismantled for recycling by Hierros Ardes.

HANDOUT/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

*Pengall* is shown in Sault Ste. Marie in 1970 in this Tom Marise photo, courtesy of Roger LeLieve.



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## IN BRIEF

## Man dies swimming in lake at Sherkston Shores

The body of a male

swimmer was recovered from Lake Erie in east Port Colborne Saturday morning after the man drowned while swimming with friends, said Niagara Regional Police.

Police said they responded to the call at 10:44 a.m. The man was swimming at Sherkston Shores when he went under and was taken by some rough water.

Police said they were not able to give an age or name of the man, but said he was not a child.

## ELECTION NOTEBOOK

## Fringe candidates vying for Niagara Centre

Ballots for voters in the Niagara Centre riding have grown by a few more candidates.

Ron Walker has returned to represent the Communist Party of Canada.

Jody DiBartolomeo signed on last week to run for the

Animal Alliance Environment Voters Party of Canada, which became registered as a federal political party in late 2005.

Walker, who registered a few weeks ago, is no stranger to campaigning, having represented the Marxist-Leninist in

the area for 10 previous elections. He earned 71 votes in the 2011 election.

DiBartolomeo represented the New Democratic Party in 2004 and 2006, and ran as an independent in 2008, earning 569 votes.

Niagara Centre election ballots also include Green Party candidate David Closs, Vance Badway for the Liberals, Conservative candidate Leanna Villella, and incumbent New Democratic candidate Malcolm Allan.

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## ■ EDUCATION

# Catholic school board enrolment increases

**WAYNE CAMPELL**  
For Postmedia Network

Niagara Catholic schools welcomed 221 more students than expected when the new school year started.

The increase raised Niagara Catholic District School Board enrolment to 21,951 in the elementary and secondary schools.

The elementary sector led the way when 309 more students than budgeted registered, to increase enrolment to 14,800.

Secondary schools saw a drop of 108 students, to 7,148.

Education director John Crocco said the decrease in high school students was partly caused by students leaving the region, switching to college programs or going into apprenticeship programs.

The increase in elementary registration was from families moving into the

area.

For the past six years, the Catholic board has provided a summer telephone registration service. Signs in front of schools advertise the phone number and staff at the board office take the calls and register students.

People familiar with the Catholic system can sign up as they move into the area, Crocco said.

"They don't have to wait and we don't lose them."

With the increase in enrolment, all teachers with the board have jobs.

At the end of June, a shuffle normally takes place with teachers retiring or departing as board administrators estimate September enrolment numbers. Some teachers are laid off.

The increased enrolment led to a recall of all full-time teachers and could mean hiring a few more assistants, staff told the trustees.

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# IN BRIEF

## Ombudsman now takes school complaints

Through the summer Niagara Catholic has prepared for the arrival of the ombudsman.

As of Sept. 1, the Ontario ombudsman began to take complaints related to schools.

The independent officer of the Ontario legislature had his role expanded under Bill 8 to include schools, municipalities and universities in addition to 500 provincial agencies it now oversees. In January 2016, municipalities and universities fall in line.

Education director John Crocco told the school board he has sent the ombudsman's office information about how Niagara Catholic handles complaints.

"We are very open and transparent," he said. "We outline what to do right on our pamphlet" listing schools and staff.

"You have to work through it starting with the individual involved and go up from there."

Some people, he said, "want to jump the queue" about concerns over

bullying, administration and school buildings.

The ombudsman can deal with individual complaints, investigate unresolved local issues, conduct large-scale investigations (such as lottery security, property tax assessment or hydro bills) and recommend changes.

The ombudsman cannot overturn government body decisions, issue penalties or investigate court decisions, private corporations, municipal police or the federal government.

Crocco said the ombudsman wanted to know the local board ways to handle complaints.

"We work things through," he said. "Niagara Catholic does an excellent job."

Ombudsman services are free and

can be obtained at [www.ombudsman.on.ca](http://www.ombudsman.on.ca). The legislature has appointed Barbara Finlay acting ombudsman in a wrangle over the next five-year term for the position. Andre Marin has served for the past 10 years.

### Two school projects see delays

Two Niagara Catholic school construction projects have faced delays.

A new \$9.8-million St. Martin elementary in Smithville has a construction funding shortfall. Niagara Catholic is talking to the Ministry of Education to resolve it. The new school on a two-hectare site will add room for 115 more students bringing capacity to 454 West Lincoln students. It is scheduled to open in September 2016.

Meanwhile, high school students are in a \$5.5-million, 10-classroom addition to Lakeshore Catholic in Port Colborne.

Completion, however, is several weeks behind schedule due to weather conditions. Roof framing, decking and masonry parapets are completed with spray foam and roofing underway. The addition will allow the school to accommodate 210 more students for a capacity of 1,017 students

from Wainfleet, Port Colborne, Fort Erie and Dunnville.

The construction work included a new facade to the school and a performing arts area for the community and school as well as a new parking lot.

### Summer school work continues

About 100 construction projects were carried out through the summer or are still underway in Niagara Catholic schools.

Facilities controller Scott Whitwell told the board the biggest project was at Lakeshore Catholic. It gave the school a whole new look along with new classrooms and laboratories.

Holy Name in Welland received a facelift in front.

New windows went in at St. Patrick and St. Mary in Niagara Falls, St. Filomena in Fort Erie and Denis Morris in Catharines.

New roofs top St. Alexander in Pelham, St. Mary in Niagara Falls, St. Andrew and St. Kevin in Welland, and St. Peter and St. Anthony in St. Catharines.

Our Lady of Fatima in St. Catharines will receive new classrooms in a renovation to accommodate a growing enrolment.



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# LOCAL NEWS

## ■ CHARITY

# United Way announces 2015 target

FRANK IEMAN  
Postmedia Network

United Way South Niagara has kicked off its 2015 fund-raising campaign.

With a goal of \$650,000 — the same goal as was set for the 2014 campaign — the organization is working on engaging with the community to encourage people to dig deep and to give.

At a kick-off breakfast last week, United Way South Niagara executive director Tamara Coleman-Lawrie announced the campaign target, and spoke to a room full of guests and dignitaries about the prevalence of poverty in the region.

She said it continues to be important that people understand what the United Way

does and support the organization in investing into services in the community that are working to help those in need.

"I think it's really around understanding that holistic approach to everything, you know," Coleman-Lawrie said in an interview after the event. "If we can wrap services around people and all of the agencies that are providing care can work together to wrap around that support system that's really going to help an individual in need to move towards lifelong success."

On board for this year's campaign as donor matches are John and Rebecca Clark, owners of M.T. Bellies and Riverstone Brent Centre. They will be matching donations by new donors up to \$20,000.

They also continue to hold their annual It's a Wonderful Life event as a fundraiser for the United Way.

"We experienced some hardship in our lives there and at a time when things were looking a little bleak for us, support from some great friends and the community en masse that supported us spiritually, monetarily ... and we just found the right thing to do is pay that back," said John Clark.

Milan Plental, senior investment adviser at Plental-Lewis Wealth Management Group, a branch of National Bank is on as this year's leadership match, pledging to match donations from new business donors up to \$20,000.

While speaking at last week's



FRANK IEMAN/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

John and Rebecca Clark speak at United Way South Niagara's 2015 campaign kick-off at Sparrow Lakes Golf Club on Wednesday.

breakfast, Plental said that fundraising efforts have been increasingly difficult due to the loss of large industries with deep pockets that the community could go to.

"We need to think outside

the box," he said.

Among several other speakers at the event was Stacey Terry, executive director of Distress Centre Niagara, who stressed the necessity of United Way funds for her

organization — which offers support to people in crisis.

Terry took the crowd through what a typical night at the centre might sound like — outlining some of the different issues people call in to talk about and how volunteers can help.

She said to people wondering where their dollars go when they donate to the United Way, "34 times a day or 240 times a week, your dollars go right into the community," referencing the average number of calls the centre receives.

To learn more or to donate visit [www.unitedwaysouthniagara.ca](http://www.unitedwaysouthniagara.ca) or call 905-735-0490.

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# LOCAL NEWS

■ **TERRY FOX:** Port Colborne hosts annual Terry Fox run and head shave

## Big buzz in Port

FRANKI IKEMAN  
Postmedia Network

There was a big pile of hair left over by the time the Terry Fox head shave wrapped up Sunday in Port Colborne.

About 35 people sat and had their heads shaved simultaneously to raise money for the annual run in support of cancer research, continuing

the Marathon of Hope the late Terry Fox started 35 years ago when he began his run across Canada to raise money and awareness.

Spirits were high at Port Colborne High School as the shaves sat in chairs and said goodbye to their long locks. Cancer survivor and long-time Terry Fox Run partici-

pant Randy Chamberlain had been growing his hair out since last year in anticipation of Sunday's cutdown day.

Unable to do the run himself this year — though he says he's expecting to be out there for it next year — Chamberlain said shaving his head was a way that he could still participate and do his part.



FRANKI IKEMAN/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Autum Chevrette shaves her head at the annual Terry Fox head shave and run at Port Colborne High School on Sunday.

"It doesn't matter what kind of shape you're in, how old you are, how young you are, how healthy you are. You can always just do something to help somebody else," Chamberlain said.

With one son watching and another one with clipper in hand, Chamberlain watched as his longer than shoulder-

length hair fell to the floor.

He said he was a little bit tired, but that it was great to be out for the event.

"I'm great. It's a sunny day and I'm on the right side of the grass," Chamberlain said. "Can't be any happier than that."

A few chairs down, 15-year-old Autum Chevrette shaved

her own head for the first time. She said she just felt it was important to raise awareness and money for cancer research.

"It's a really important cause and I just feel really passionate about it," Chevrette said.

She couldn't stop touching her newly bald head.

"I feel five pounds lighter," she said with a laugh. "I feel awesome, I feel just amazing. It's such an empowering moment."

Event organizer Nancy Salvage said she was happy with the way the 2015 run turned out.

"I enjoy it every year and this year was no exception," Salvage said.

Port Colborne had hoped to break the Guinness World Record by having 268 heads, but Salvage wasn't upset about missing that target.

"Well, we were shooting for a world record. It was pretty tough to hope to get 268 people, but we had said for five years that we were going to try, so we gave it a shot," Salvage said. "We're having fun, and we're doing it for the right reasons."

Salvage joined the party and shaved her head, with a big smile on her face as hair was buzzed away. She said she was so grateful to all those that came out.

"Every single person that comes out to participate I truly appreciate and it's one of my best days of the year."

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## ACCOLADES

# John Turner to receive NPCA environmental award

**MICHELLE ALLENBERG**  
Postmedia Network

Former Canadian prime minister John Turner today is to receive Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority's first Water and Environmental Leadership Award.

Turner served as Canada's 17th prime minister, from June 30 to Sept. 17 in 1984. This award will be the first environmental award he has received.

NPCA chose Turner as its first recipient of this environmental work.

"He has a national interest with the environment — always a lot of passion for the Great Lakes and water. We wanted to recognize his national passion towards the environment," said CAO Carmen D'Angelo.

NPCA is hosting its award gala at Queen's Landing in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Meanwhile, NPCA is establishing a scholarship with Brock University. The scholarship will be given to a second-year

Brock student pursuing environmental studies. Money raised through seat sales for the gala will go towards the scholarship. The scholarship will be \$5,000 for its first year.

Other money raised will go towards funding different programs run by NPCA.

The venue is small and there are 160 seats available with limited seating left. Tickets are \$300, but guests will receive a \$200 tax receipt.

NPCA usually hosts a golf tournament to raise money, but D'Angelo said there are too many golf tournaments to compete with. The authority decided to host a gala instead.

"We wanted to be creative and do something different. We wanted to establish an environmental leadership award," D'Angelo said.

In the future the award will be given to local residents, agencies or companies.

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# LOCAL NEWS

■ **INTEREST:** Feline initiative is providing Jobs4Cats

## Finding homes for diverse cats

**MICHELLE ALLENBERG**  
Postmedia Network

If you want a hardworking cat, look no further.

Port Colborne Feline Initiative's Jobs4Cats launched recently and is aiming to give certain cats a nontraditional home.

The feline initiative is a non-profit organization that finds homes for all its feline friends. The cats the organization traps in the region are neutered, vaccinated and returned to where they are found. If the area in which they are trapped isn't suitable, the organization tries to find homes or relocate them.

The cats that aren't suited for a traditional indoor home will be placed in the Jobs4Cats program.

Kristi Vogel of the Port Colborne Feline Initiative hopes to have those cats adopted by people who have rural properties.

"They might want a hardworking cat that will help them out in many different ways — providing environmentally friendly rodent control. There are all different things that cats can do and they work for their supper," Vogel said.

The individual or family adopting their working cat should provide water, food and shelter as payment for their cat's hard work

Vogel said. There are currently six cats ready for adoption.

"They are ready to perform and are asking for the chance to be interviewed and are ready to work."

The non-profit has enrolled close to 1,300 cats and kittens to date, Vogel said she's seen a difference. The organization is breaking the cycle of reproduction, where cats are living on the streets.

Welland and District Humane Society works with the feline initiative by assisting in the adoption process.

"We get comments from people all the time, 'Gee I just don't see the number of stray cats

roaming around,'" Vogel said.

Although the barn cat program isn't a new idea, Vogel said it's all in the way you market it.

You have to "make it appealing to the public and get the word out there," she said about the program.

"There are so many groups out there that are trying to assist this problem, so there are certainly not unique in this way. What I feel our strengths are is we offer a number of different programs and we focus on one community, because

resources are slim."

Port Colborne Feline Initiative is looking for a new building. It currently works out of volunteers' houses and a trailer. Vogel said the initiative has outgrown the trailer and is looking for someone in the community who has a building it could use.

To adopt a cat you can contact the Port Colborne Feline Initiative at 905-964-4778.

michelle.allenberg@sunmedia.ca



MICHELLE ALLENBERG/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Kristi Vogel of the Port Colborne Feline Initiative holds Mojo, a six-year-old cat waiting for adoption at the Welland Humane Society in the Seaway Mall.

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■ **CRIME:** Theft of farm animals leaves Port Colborne woman heartbroken

# Thieves nab ducks, hens, roosters

MICHELLE ALLENBERG  
Postmedia Network

A rooster named Mr. Fancy Pants and 45 of his fellow fowl are missing from a property in Port Robinson.

Jacqueline Dmyntrow of Port Colborne said her pets were stolen Sept. 9 night while she was at work.

"They were prepared. They knew when I wouldn't be here," she said of the thieves. "They didn't take any of the cages, so they brought something to put them in."

Her family has owned the farm in Port Robinson for about 50 years. The land is her "happy place," she said, and it's where she comes to be with her pets. The farm has horses, donkeys, ducks and chickens among other animals.

Every morning, Dmyntrow said, she comes to feed and visit the animals. On Sept. 10, a large number of her animals had gone missing.

She said twenty-six Muscovy ducks and ducklings, three hens, five roosters and 11 barred rock chicks/American cross were stolen. "I know it wasn't predators or there would be evidence. Also, the predators wouldn't have taken that many in one night and there was a donkey in the pen with them, so she would have gone after it if it were a coyote," she said.

All the animals were pets, and Dmyntrow said most had names. She spoke fondly of

the silkie rooster Mr. Fancy Pants, saying she would watch him and the other birds play.

"He has a very distinct crow. It sounds like an old siren winding up and then tapering off," she said.

Since Dmyntrow's pets have been missing, she hasn't been able to sleep and has been worried about their safety. She has contacted stores that sell duck feed to see if anyone has been buying large amounts of food. She also started calling butcher shops.

"I know they were traumatized the night that they were taken and they could possibly be hurt. I mean, quite possibly some of them might be dead by now ... I can't understand how someone can do this. They are animals, they are living things," she said, wiping away tears.

All Dmyntrow wants it to have her pets returned to her. She said she contacted the humane society and Niagara Regional Police.

"I know the police are limited in their resources. Stolen animals aren't high on their list of priorities and I know they can't go through everyone's backyard and barns looking for them," she said.

As of Monday afternoon, police said they have no suspects and are continuing to investigate.

Dmyntrow asks anyone with information to contact investigators at 905-735-7811 or phone Crime Stoppers anonymously at 1-800-222-8477

(TIPS).

michelle.allenberg@postmedia.ca



MICHELLE ALLENBERG  
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NETWORK  
Jacqueline Dmyntrow of Port Colborne looks over some of the coops where she kept her chickens.

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■ NIAGARA REGIONAL EXHIBITION: Welland welcomes fall with annual tradition

# NRE fares well in 163rd year

**FRANK IEMAN**  
Postmedia Network

It's a 163-year-old tradition that the board of the Niagara Regional Exhibition refuses to let die.

The Welland fair ran last Thursday through Sunday and featured horse and livestock displays, an agriculture show, a midway full of rides, food vendors and plenty of entertainment.

Despite a rainy Saturday, NRE board member Arthur Gill said attendance was a little bit higher than last year.

Amber Gilbert, first vice-president of the NRE, said the fair brought in more entertainment, new musical acts, two demolition

derbies and a full horse breed display this year to draw people in.

"We have a full crew that is fighting hard to keep the fair alive," Gilbert said.

The fair, aside from the typical attractions of rides, junk food and music, features a large agricultural component. Horse shows, cattle shows, goat shows, vegetable shows, poultry shows and much more comprise a large part of the Welland fair schedule.

Both Gill and Gilbert said it's important that people who may not be exposed to farming on a regular basis check the fair out.

"It's important that the people from today, the kids from today,

learn that your food doesn't just come from a grocery store shelf," Gilbert said. "It comes from a farm before it gets to that shelf."

"That's the main thing you've got to teach the people," said Gill. "We're lucky that we have the animals that we have."

Gilbert said she would like to see the fair continue to grow and equal historic highs in attendance. She said fair is already looking at ways to improve.

"We're already starting to plug away for next year, and see where we can improve next year, and we're always looking for volunteers," Gilbert said there are several

committees that people are encouraged to join.

For more information on volunteering, contact the NRE at 905-735-6413 or email

info@niagararegionalexhibition.com.

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**FRANK IEMAN/POSTMEDIA NETWORK**  
Jenn Rucay competes in a dash for cash competition at the Niagara Regional Exhibition on Saturday.



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## ■ WINE FESTIVAL

# Majors get together to stomp out poverty

**JULIE JOCSAK**  
Postmedia Network

Grape juice flew while mayors, councillors, IceDogs, Grape Kings and kids tried to Stomp Out Poverty.

The annual Mayor's Invitational Grape Stomp has been part of the Niagara Wine Festival for years but this year a new element was added.

St. Catharines Mayor Walter Sendzik challenged other local mayors to a food collection drive.

Lord Mayor Pat Darte of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Mayor Douglas Joyner of West Lincoln, Mayor April Jeffs of Wainfleet, Mayor John Maloney of Port Colborne and Mayor Walter Sendzik of St. Catharines took part in the messy tradition. Three councillors, Sergio Paone of Thorold, Bonnie Jeffs of Welland and Mike Strange of Niagara Falls, also took part.

The participants had 60 seconds to squish the grapes in the wine barrels with their bare feet. The juice was then measured to determine the winner.

Spectators in the front row had a hard time keeping clean as the grapes and juice started to fly.

St. Catharines Mayor Walter Sendzik took home the overall top prize for the best combination of grape stomping and collecting food.

"It's very gratifying," Sendzik said. "You look at someone like Mike Strange or Lord Mayor Darte, and you don't know what their capabilities are. You go in kind of nervous and it makes you stomp a little harder."

Grape Growers of Ontario donated the grapes for the event.

This was the first year a food drive was part of the grape stomp, everyone liked the idea, and it looks like it is here to stay, Sendzik said.

"I think this is a new concept that we

are going to continue to do annually," he said. "I just think the community really came out. I want to thank the people that came out and supported St. Catharines and Thorold Community Care on my behalf. It all goes to a good cause; it's a great event."

Maloney came out ahead in the food drive, collecting 3,178 kilograms for Port Care.

Sendzik came second with 933 kg for Community Care St. Catharines. Joyner came third with 227 kilograms for West Lincoln Community Care while Paone came fourth with 222 kg for Community Care of Thorold. Lord Mayor Pat Darte came fifth with 216 kg for Newark Neighbours and Fokkens came sixth with 215 kg for Open Arms Mission and The Hope Centre. Jeffs came seventh with 103 kg for the Volunteer Firefighter Christmas Basket Program and Strange raised 42 kg of food for Project SHARE.

The total weight of the food collected for each participant was used to calculate a base amount of juice to start the grape stomp.

For example, Sendzik collected 933 kg of food. St. Catharines has a population of 131,400, so Sendzik was given just 1.57 ounces of juice to start his stomp. Darte collected 216 kg of food from a population of 15,400 in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Darte started the grape stomp with 3.08 ounces.

Other stompers included representatives from Niagara first responders who participated in the Local Hero's Stomp. Three members of the Niagara IceDogs, Ben Jones, Hayden Davis and Christian Mitri, had their own stomp. Past and present Grape Kings, Kevin Buis of Glenlake Vineyards and Jamie Stogersland of Pillitteri Winery, participated in a grape stomp. There was a stomp for children.



JULIE JOCSAK / POSTMEDIA NETWORK

The top three finalists, left, councillor Sergio Paone of Thorold, St. Catharines mayor Walter Sendzik and councillor Mike Strange of Niagara Falls, pose for a photo following the annual Mayor's Invitational Grape Stomp. The competition was to see who could stomp out the most juice during the Niagara Wine Festival in Montebello Park, St. Catharines on Saturday.

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# Etsy community uniting in Falls Saturday

ALISON LANGLEY  
Postmedia Network

More than 30 Canadian cities  
will have a one-day marketplace  
celebrating the Etsy community

on Saturday, including Niagara  
Falls.  
Local Etsy sellers will showcase

their hand-made and vintage wares at  
Heartland Forest from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
as part of Etsy: Made in Canada.

The Niagara marketplace will include  
original artwork, furniture, decor and  
more from 40 Niagara artisans, said Erin  
Snow, event co-ordinator.

This is the first time Niagara Falls has  
hosted a Made in Canada event.

"We can't wait to demonstrate what a  
passionate group of artisans live right here  
in Niagara, so make sure you come by to  
see us in action," said Snow, who offers  
aromatherapy products and essential oils  
through her Etsy store Chasing Clouds.

Several food trucks will be at Heartland  
Forest for the event as well as local wineries  
and breweries.

Snow said Heartland Forest was a per-  
fect fit for Etsy.

"One of the things that is important to  
me is working with non-profit organiza-  
tions and Heartland Forest, to some, is an  
unknown gem. I want to bring awareness  
to them as well."

Launched in 2005, Etsy is an online  
marketplace for hand-made items.

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## IN BRIEF

### NHS chief of staff to take on dual role in Hamilton

Dr. Tom Stewart is expanding his leadership role in health care.  
The Niagara Health System chief of

staff and executive vice-president is being appointed to chief of staff at St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton, in addition to his existing position.

The new appointment will take effect Oct. 13.

The shared leadership role is expected to continue to build a "high-performing physician culture for both organizations," St. Joseph's said in a news release.

"Tom is a remarkable clinician, researcher, and leader, who is also renowned in the province," said Kevin Smith, who also plays a dual role as chief executive officer of both organizations.

"Enabling him to work with both teams of physicians in the region will no doubt advance patient care in our health system."

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	<b>HANKOOK</b> OPTIMO 45 ALL-WEATHER 80% <small>DRIVING</small> 26% <small>STOPPING</small> 323% <small>WET TREADWEAR</small> <b>TIRE TEST RESULTS</b> <b>OVERALL SCORE 93.7</b>	<b>MOTOMASTER</b> RM2 ALL-SEASON 53% <small>DRIVING</small> 17% <small>STOPPING</small> 212% <small>WET TREADWEAR</small> <b>TIRE TEST RESULTS</b> <b>OVERALL SCORE 96.3</b>	

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## ■ ARTS

'This is going to transform how we experience the arts'

**KARENA WALTER**  
Postmedia Network

Brook University's new downtown arts school is one of the most important milestones of St. Catharines revitalization, president Jack Lighthstone said.

The university envisioned a downtown that could be an arts, culture, entertainment and digital media hub when it decided to move, he said.

"We would be part of something that was greater than ourselves."

Lighthstone was speaking to hundreds of people who gathered outside the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts for its grand opening Friday.

The school is located behind St. Paul Street near Meridian Centre and the new St. Catharines Performing Arts Centre. Designed by Diamond Schmitt Architects, it's inside a renovated Canada Hair Cloth building, which dates to the late 1800s, and newly built spaces.

About 500 students in drama, visual arts, music and arts and culture began classes in the facility on Sept. 9.

Lighthstone said the vision to create a new hub for the city started with former dean of humanities Rosemary Drage Hale. He said to have a vision and move it to an actual entity takes a lot of work and support. The city, provincial government and others believed in it.

While there was a lot of skepticism, Lighthstone said hope and optimism replaced skepticism when Marilyn I. Walker, a textile artist, and her husband Norris made a "transformative" gift of \$15 million.

"When they made that commitment, everyone knew we had no choice but to make it happen," Lighthstone said.

Marilyn Walker was in attendance large

## BY THE NUMBERS

**95,000** — Square feet of the facility  
**\$45.5 million** — Cost of the building  
**500** — Number of students

Friday, but her health prevented her from making a speech. Husband Norris Walker said that the school is a world-class facility that will inspire students and faculty.

"Marilyn and I are excited to have played a small part in this endeavour," he said, after which the couple released a standing ovation.

Mayor Walter Szendzik said Marilyn Walker transformed a school and a city. "That is a legacy that will never be forgotten," he said to her.

Szendzik said a lot of people didn't know the depth, skill and creativity of Brock's arts school when it was secluded on campus. Now the city will be energized by arts and creativity.

"This is going to transform how we experience the arts."

The Ontario government contributed \$26.1 million towards the facility's total \$45.5-million cost.

St. Catharines MPP Jim Bradley said the school is a wonderful asset and investment in the future because of the students who will use it.

It joins other new developments that are transforming the downtown. Bradley said anyone who hasn't been to St. Catharines in a while and drives down Hwy. 406 are blown away by what they see in the heart of the city.

"There's a new feeling of optimism in downtown St. Catharines."

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■ **MUSIC:** Niagara Falls singer's speech kicks off Niagara Wine Festival

# Country comfort of Tim Hicks

**JOHN LAW**  
Postmedia Network

Tim Hicks recalls the painful moment he thought his music career was over.

The Niagara Falls singer/songwriter had just returned from an overseas trip playing in cover bands and had no

gigs lined up. The few dates he booked prior were already given to friends. He was in his late 20s and out of work.

"I had decided, that was it," he recalls. He started "concocting" a speech to his wife Amanda about how he gave music his best shot, and it was time to move on.

"I fully expected her to say, 'Thank God we can start living our lives now.' She didn't. She turned around and said, 'Poor you. You got it really hard. You go out every night and do what you love.'"

"She said, 'I'll support you whatever you want to do, but you'll be more miserable if

you hang it up.' That was the real turning point for me. I let go of all that pressure on myself to make it."

Last Wednesday, Hicks returned to Niagara a full-blown Canadian country star. With multiple Juno and Canadian Country Music Association nominations, he's about

to start a cross-country tour that includes a homecoming date at the Scotiabank Convention Centre in Niagara Falls Nov. 27.

Hicks was back in St. Catharines as guest speaker for the Grape Growers of Ontario's annual Celebrity Luncheon at Club Roma. Though his guitar was always within reach, he says it's the first time he's been booked to speak instead of sing — though he ended up doing both.

It came about through friends Heidi and Curtis Fielding, who own the Fielding Estate Winery in Beamsville. "Heidi called me up one day and said, 'Who's your speaking agent?' I didn't even know what that was."

Once booked, Hicks figured he would just expand on the stories he tells most every night in concert. Stories about how he emerged from a local scene of bars and rock bands to find his inner cowboy.

"I came from a long line of storytellers anyway, so it didn't scare me to talk about my journey," he says. "What was bizarre is that these people wanted me to come."

"I called Heidi back, and she said, 'People just want to hear your story. They love a hard work story. I don't know how to do it any other way.'"

The celebrity luncheon is the unofficial kickoff to the Niagara Wine Festival. Grape Growers of Ontario CEO Debbie Zimmerman says she was "thrilled" this year's celebrity speaker is from Niagara, giving the luncheon some home-

grown inspiration. The annual event attracts about 350 people.

Previous guests have included Olympic speed skater Kristina Lennay Doan and "Man in Motion" Paralympian Rick Hansen.

Since winning male vocalist of the year at the 2011 Niagara Music Awards, Hicks has been a regular on the Canadian Country charts with hits *Get By, Hell Raisin'*, *Good Time* and *Here Comes the Thunder*. An admitted latecomer to country music, he says he felt something click the first time he donned a cowboy hat.

"I'd been around the world playing in cruise ships and tribute bands and duo gigs ... It was almost like the art and the work were still separate," he says. "At some point, they had to come together. And they did come together when I decided I'm going to do country full time."

At the time there was no country music scene in Niagara. Hicks thought people would mock him.

"But when I put on a pair of boots and jeans and have my acoustic guitar on me, I felt more like myself that I ever had."

Now that he's in the eye of the storm, Hicks is enjoying every second he can.

"It still freaks me out when I go someplace in Canada and I meet somebody I don't know, and they know my music," he says. "That will never be lost on me, from a guy that played the Blue Lagoon at 15 years old."

john.law@sunmedia.ca



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JULIE JOOSAX/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Country musician Tim Hicks was the star of the Grape Growers of Ontario Celebrity Luncheon that was held at Club Roma in St. Catharines on Wednesday.

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## ■ MUSIC

## Niagara Rhythm tops NMA nominations

JOHN LAW  
Postmedia Network

Veteran Niagara-on-the-Lake musician Steve Goldberger and St. Catharines folk rockers Odds & Ends lead the way for the eighth annual Niagara Music Awards.

Goldberger, one of the region's busiest guitarists with his band the Niagara Rhythm Section, is up for eight awards, including album and songwriter of the year.

"I can say it's always a thrill to have one's work acknowl-

edged by our peers," says Goldberger, who performs regularly at the Old Winery in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Newcomers Odds & Ends are close behind with seven nominations, including folk artist and new group of the year. The trio of Ariella

Aburto, Jay Falone and Pat Shea were "thrilled" to get the news last Thursday.

"Being a musician or a vocalist feels very vulnerable most of the time," says Aburto. "You're constantly putting your heart and soul out there with very little feedback."

## 2015 NMA NOMINEES

## Album of the Year:

Blame the Wanderers

Kayd

Glass Apple Bonzai

Mudmen

Road Waves

Sarah Boulton

Scott Harvey

Steve Goldberger

## Adult Contemporary Artist:

Battered Egos

Jamie Derek Moore

Sarah Boulton

Country Artist:

Jamie Derek Moore

MJ Lafair

Steve Goldberger

Engineer:

Al Jandro

Glass Apple Bonzai

Steve Goldberger

Thomas Weller

Female Vocalist:

Ashlynn Vince

Blindside Incentive

Kayd

Gail Davidson

Jessica Wilson

Ladee Lirix

Mei Monaco

Odds & Ends

Sammy Morrelli

Under the Red

Folk Artist:

Odds & Ends

Thomas Weller

Sarah Boulton

Heavy Metal Artist:

Blindside Incentive

Crutch

Hip Hop Artist:

Deeze

Lady Larix

Jae Ari

Instrumental Artist:

Al Jandro

Bryan Sorensen

Jamie Derek Moore

Zach Preston

Zac Tieszen

Jazz Artist:

Gail Davidson

Road Waves

Male Vocalist:

A Book for Wanderers

Josh Mills

Glass Apple Bonzai

Steve Goldberger

New Artist:

Bryan Sorensen

Christian Distefano

Deeze

Josh Mills

Ladee Lirix

Thomas Weller

Visca

New Group:

Blind Side Intersection

Left in Line

Odds & Ends

Road Waves

Tides

Under the Red

## Original Group:

Blame the Neighbour

Blindside Incentive

Mudmen

Odds & Ends

Under the Red

Original Song:

Agatha Lafay

Bryan Sorensen

Mudmen

Odds & Ends

Rob Graham Band

Sammy Morrelli

Steve Goldberger

Steve Goldberger w/ Tim Hicks

Victoria K

Producer:

Crutch

Glass Apple Bonzai

Steve Goldberger

Progressive Rock:

Battered Egos

Blind Side Incentive

Jah Cordophones

Left in Line

Promoter:

Eric Dickson (Indoor Shoes)

Rafik Guirguis

Rising Star:

Christian Distefano

Ladee Lirix

Mei Monaco

Odds & Ends

Rob Graham Band

Swishop Styles

Tides

Zac Tieszen

Rock Artist:

Blame in the Daze

Blame the Neighbour

A Book for Wanderers

Crutch

Road Waves

Tides

Under the Red

Songwriter of the Year:

A Book for Wanderers

Glass Apple Bonzai

Jessica Wilson

Josh Mills

Mudmen

Odd & Ends

Rob Graham Band

Sammy Morrelli

Sarah Boulton

Steve Goldberger

Unsung Hero (community

recognition)

Burnie Brandt

Daniel Spilchuck

Eric Conlon

Kyle Whittaker

John Navaroli

Venue:

The Sanctuary (Ridgeway)

Taps (Niagara Falls)

Video:

Crutch

Jae Ari

Mei Monaco

Visca

World Music:

Mudmen

Zach Preston



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■ **MUSIC:** New venue proves popular after old stage damaged by flood

# Niagara Concerts continues its comeback

**JOHN LAW**

Postmedia Network

Two years after nearly pulling the plug, Niagara Concerts is enjoying a resurgence.

At least it feels like one to concert manager John Anstruther. Even if crowds can't match the constant sellouts of a decade ago, there's optimism heading into the

company's 42nd season instead of the uncertainty of recent years.

It turns out one of the biggest setbacks may have inadvertently saved the local institution.

In July of 2013, a vicious storm flooded the 1,000-seat theatre at Kingston College on Epworth Circle, the company's home for decades. The theatre immediately closed for mould removal, forcing

Niagara Concerts to find a new home for its 2013 season.

The Scotiabank Convention Centre was the only real option in Niagara Falls, recalls Anstruther. He wasn't sure how the company's aging subscribers would handle the move. He was worried it would be the Niagara Concerts' final season.

It became a fruitful partnership.

Audiences liked the new venue, and the convention centre loved adding concerts to its schedule. In turn, convention centre staff took over much of the promotion and production.

"It's given us a breath of fresh air," he says. "We know things are being done and being looked after. We got an issue, they deal with it immediately. Every (performer) we've had there up to this point is really pleased with everything that's gone on."

Unlike past seasons, concertgoers now have reserved seating, with plenty of parking. The result is more subscribers this season, with a younger demographic showing up.

"I was worried, I thought we'd be even lower with subscriptions," says Anstruther, "but it's turned around quite nicely."

"We're not where we were four or five years ago with a thousand (subscribers), but we are over 500 now, which has taken the edge off."

The new season kicks off Friday with Lighthouse, the Canadian art rock band behind *Sunny Days* and *Pretty Lady* who won three straight Junos for best Canadian group of the year from 1972 to 1974.

**WHAT:** Niagara Concerts 2015/16 Season

**WHEN:** Sept. 25 to May 14

**WHERE:** Scotiabank Convention Centre, 6815 Stanley Ave., Niagara Falls

**TICKETS:** [scotiabank.ticketpro.ca](http://scotiabank.ticketpro.ca) or 1-888-655-9090

From there it will be returning Niagara Concerts favourites Lunch at Allen's Oct. 29, Matt Dusk Nov. 28, The Leahys March 19 and Jarvis Church May 14.

Partnering with the convention centre has Anstruther thinking a more diverse schedule is possible soon.

"I'm hoping this is step one of probably a three- or four-year process to try and get in some more popular talent for people in the 35-to-40 demographic."

It could also lead to an expanded season, but Anstruther is proceeding with caution.

"We have to prove ourselves, that we can put enough burns in the seat that we at least cover costs. As a nonprofit, we can't take a loss."

[john.law@summedia.ca](http://john.law@summedia.ca)

## Port Colborne Household Hazardous Waste Day

**Saturday, Sept. 26  
8 a.m. - 3 p.m.**

**Vale Health & Wellness Centre  
550 Elizabeth St., Port Colborne**

This event is open to all Niagara region residents. No commercial, institutional or industrial waste is accepted.

Gasoline will not be decanted at the depot. The container and the contents will be taken for safe disposal.

Please refer to [www.niagararegion.ca/waste](http://www.niagararegion.ca/waste) for a full list of acceptable materials and packaging and handling requirements.

All material that is brought to the event is recycled, reused or disposed of in a safe and proper manner.

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**HANDOUT / POSTMEDIA NETWORK**  
Niagara Concerts brings The Leahys to the Scotiabank Convention Centre March 19. The company's 42nd season opens Friday with Lighthouse.

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